

## LETTER FROM MOSCOW

**SPECTER OF GERMANY** When you ask the Soviet-man-in-the-Moscow-street how he feels about the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, his response depends on whether he is over or under the age of 35.

Young Russians on the whole are ashamed of their government's action. Their attitudes, while more cautiously expressed, closely parallel the attitudes of many American youths to the war in Vietnam. They consider it wrong, unjustified, and damaging to their national reputation.

Soviet citizens old enough to have fought in World War II, however, tend to regard the Czech reformers as naïve and the Soviet invasion as a necessary defense against West Germany. Here is a typical opinion from a 45-year-old engineer: "Dubcek was stupid and ungrateful. We (Russian troops) liberated Czechoslovakia from the Fascists in World War II, and once is enough. If Dubcek had continued to make deals with the Germans, we probably would have had to liberate the Czechs again. We have had enough of that nightmare."

"That nightmare" is still very much alive in Russia. Even young people who deplore the invasion of Czechoslovakia seem to agree with Pravda's party line on the "German threat." Hardly a day goes by without some prominent news story pointing to new evidence of Nazism reborn in West Germany.

**Hitler's ghost** is the most familiar villain of Soviet political cartoons.

NATO is resented for many reasons in the USSR. But what the Russians fear most about the organization is that it may place nuclear weapons in German hands.

"Some of us may be against the invasion of Czechoslovakia," says a young Armenian studying at Moscow State University, "but for all of us the German threat is still the number-one issue. And on that issue all segments of the Soviet people are prepared to go to war."

This hatred and fear of Germany is unanimous and obsessive. It is not just a national paranoia whipped up by Soviet propagandists. The Germans killed more than 20 million Russians in World War II. The war left no Russian family untouched. The ubiquitous Russian "babushka" (little grandmother) represents an entire generation of women widowed by the Hitler hordes. The war is much less a fading memory and much more a still-painful wound to the Russians than it is to Americans.

Russians say they cannot conceive how Western Europeans and Americans can permit the emergence of a neo-Nazi party in West Germany.

The most popular movie now showing in Moscow is called Dead Season. The movie charges that the West is not only condoning neo-Nazism by permitting it to exist, but is also using the services of former Hitler Nazis to develop biochemical warfare. The Soviets are convinced that Germans--not Americans--still pose the greatest threat to world peace.

While the average Russian citizen is now enjoying more consumer comforts than he did 15 or 20 years ago, the Russian citizen has been plunged into

a new repression which is not too different from Stalin's reign of terror.

Thinking citizens in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev are finding it difficult and dangerous to express opinions that are in any way unorthodox or critical of the government. The composers' congress, held in Moscow recently, was dominated by the most threatening, dogmatic list of "Orders to the People's Artists" issued in a long time. And for every Russian writer sentenced to years of hard labor in a show trial, scores of relatively unknown, unpublished dissidents lose their jobs and are banished from their home cities as "parasites on the state."

**"THIRD EARS"** Terror as it existed under Stalin may not be evident in Moscow's Alexandrovsky Garden where schoolchildren sleigh and ski on the snow-packed embankments of the Kremlin's northwest wall, but there is an undercurrent of fear in the behavior of any Russian daring enough to befriend an American. For a Russian to meet with an American on a purely friendly basis, he must arrange the meeting with elaborate precaution. Telephones, hotel rooms, dormitories, tables in restaurants, even seats in the crowded Moscow or Leningrad subway are all said to have "third ears."

While walking along a Leningrad street late at night, convinced that his words could not be overheard, a young lawyer said: "Compared to the way it is today in Russia, the Khrushchev years were like a holiday of thought and opinion. What I fear is I will forget those good years as completely as the government

Why have Brezhnev and Kossygin and the other Soviet leaders "erased" the "good years" of Khrushchev's liberalized domestic policies? Why have the so-called "hard-liners" taken over in the Kremlin?

The factor that led to Khrushchev's downfall was the fear among the old Stalinists that de-Stalinization carried a serious threat to themselves. And they were right to be afraid. The logical extension of de-Stalinization would have been to unleash the people's long-suppressed anger against Stalin's accomplices in the 20-year terror which took the lives of an estimated 12-15 million Russians.

One of Khrushchev's most controversial moves was to sanction the publication of Evgeny Yevtushenko's poem, Stalin's Heirs, an impassioned reminder that many of Russia's leaders were the privileged children of the Stalinist purges. Almost all incumbent senior Soviet politicians, among them the men who now occupy the Kremlin, rose to the top of the Communist Party by acting as informers and henchmen during the Stalin purges. These men no doubt suffer nightmares thinking about the survivors of Stalinist labor camps forming a "club" such as the one formed last year in Czechoslovakia by former political prisoners released after President Novotny's overthrow.

The article of Soviet law that Stalin invoked to exile millions to Siberia is now defunct. But it has been replaced by a new article that outlaws works or actions considered "to libel the Soviet state."

**STALIN'S GHOST** Just as Hitler's ghost stalks the memories of the Russian people in their fear and hatred of Germany, so Stalin's ghost

former colleagues who rule Russia today--stalks the Kremlin. Russia's younger generation is resigned to living with that ghost at least for another decade.

"We are all Stalin's heirs in a way," says a college student from Belorussia, "because his heirs include his victims as well as his beneficiaries. Until his beneficiaries die, there will be no such thing as de-Stalinization, and things in Russia will not really get better."